Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a piezoelectric element comprising the steps of:

providing a ceramic substrate;

superposing a piezoelectric material ~~made of~~ on one of said ceramic substrate and an electrode formed on said ceramic substrate, said piezoelectric material having a piezoelectric ceramic composition ~~containing~~ comprising a $PbMg_{1/3}Nb_{2/3}O_3$-$PbZrO_3$-$PbTiO_3$ ternary system solid solution composition as a main component, represented by ~~the following~~a general formula of $Pb_x(Mg_{y/3}Nb_{2/3})_aTi_bZr_cO_3$, wherein $0.95 \leqq x \leqq 1.05$, $0.8 \leq y \leqq 1.0$, and a, b and c are decimals in a range of (a,b,c) = (0.550, 0.425, 0.025), (0.550, 0.325, 0.125), (0.375, 0.325, 0.300), (0.100, 0.425, 0.475), (0.100, 0.475, 0.425) and (0.375, 0.425, 0.200) in coordinates having coordinate axes of said a, b and c values, wherein a+b+c = 1.00, ~~(1) as a main component and~~said piezoelectric composition also including 0.05 to 10.0 mass% of NiO ~~on a ceramic substrate or on an electrode formed on the ceramic substrate, and~~;

providing a container defining a space having a volume and including an atmosphere, said atmosphere comprising an atmosphere-controlling material having the same composition as said piezoelectric material and including 0.03 to 0.5 mg/cm^3 of NiO per unit volume of said space; and

subjecting ~~the~~ said superposed piezoelectric material to a thermal treatment in ~~an~~ said atmosphere, ~~where 0.03 – 0.5 mg/cm^3 (NiO conversion amount per unit volume of a space in a container) of an atmosphere-controlling material having the same composition as the piezoelectric material is coexisted,~~

~~$Pb_x(Mg_{y/3}Nb_{2/3})_aTi_bZr_cO_3$ (1)~~

~~wherein $0.95 \leqq x \leqq 1.05$; $0.8 \leqq y \leqq 1.0$; a, b and c are decimals falling in a range surrounded by (a,b,c) = (0.550, 0.425, 0.025), (0.550, 0.325, 0.125), (0.375, 0.325, 0.300), (0.100, 0.425, 0.475), (0.100, 0.475, 0.425) and (0.375, 0.425, 0.200), in the coordinates with coordinate axes of said a, b and c, and a+b+c = 1.00.~~

2. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a piezoelectric element comprising the steps of:

providing a ceramic substrate having an electrode formed thereon;

superposing a piezoelectric material ~~made of~~on said electrode formed on said ceramic substrate, said piezoelectric material having a piezoelectric ceramic composition ~~containing~~ comprising a $PbMg_{1/3}Nb_{2/3}O_3$-$PbZrO_3$-$PbTiO_3$ ternary system solid solution composition as a main component, represented by ~~the following a~~ general formula ~~(1) as a main component and~~ of $Pb_x(Mg_{y/3}Nb_{2/3})_aTi_bZr_cO_3$, wherein $0.95 \leqq x 1.05$, $0.8 \leqq y \leqq 1.0$, and a, b and c are decimals in a range of (a,b,c) = (0.550, 0.425, 0.025), (0.550, 0.325, 0.125), (0.375, 0.325, 0.300), (0.100, 0.425, 0.475), (0.100, 0.475, 0.425) and (0.375, 0.425, 0.200) in coordinates having coordinate axes of said a, b and c values, wherein a+b+c = 1.00, said piezoelectric composition also including 0.05 to 10.0 mass% of NiO ~~on a ceramic substrate or on an electrode formed on the ceramic substrate, and~~;

providing a container defining a space having a volume and including an atmosphere and a setter provided within said space, said atmosphere comprising an atmosphere-controlling material having the same composition as said piezoelectric material and including 0.03 to 0.5 mg/cm^3 of NiO per unit volume of said space;

providing said superposed piezoelectric material within said space of said container; and

subjecting ~~the~~ said superposed piezoelectric material to a thermal treatment in ~~an~~ said atmosphere;

~~wherein 0.03 – 0.5 mg/cm^3 (NiO conversion amount per unit volume of a space in a container) of an atmosphere-controlling material having the same composition as~~

~~the piezoelectric material is coexisted as a container for housing said electrode on which the piezoelectric material is superposed and a setter for mounting the piezoelectric material thereon~~

~~$Pb_x(Mg_{y/3}Nb_{2/3})_aTi_bZr_cO_3$ —(1)~~

~~wherein $0.95 \leqq x \leqq 1.05$; $0.8 \leqq y \leqq 1.0$; a, b and c are decimals falling in a range surrounded by (a,b,c) = (0.550, 0.425, 0.025), (0.550, 0.325, 0.125), (0.375, 0.325, 0.300), (0.100, 0.425, 0.475), (0.100, 0.475, 0.425) and (0.375, 0.425, 0.200), in the coordinates with coordinate axes of said a, b and c, and a+b+c = 1.00~~.